

Introduction

The Memphis Poll provides a forum for citizen input regarding City of Memphis services and public issues. The Memphis Poll presents positive findings about City services as well as problems related to services. This is the thirteen annual Memphis Poll and the final report will provide trend information over this time.

The 2005 Memphis Poll report, along with the questionnaire, will be available online at www.memphistn.gov in April of 2005. The numbering of figures in this summary corresponds to the full report.

City Priorities

The 2005 Memphis Poll asked citizens to rank the services that they considered most important. Figure 3-1 shows that police crime protection was the most important priority with an 85 percent score. Crime protection has consistently been the top rated priority in every year of the Memphis Poll.

Figure 3-1: Citizens' Ranking of Service Priorities

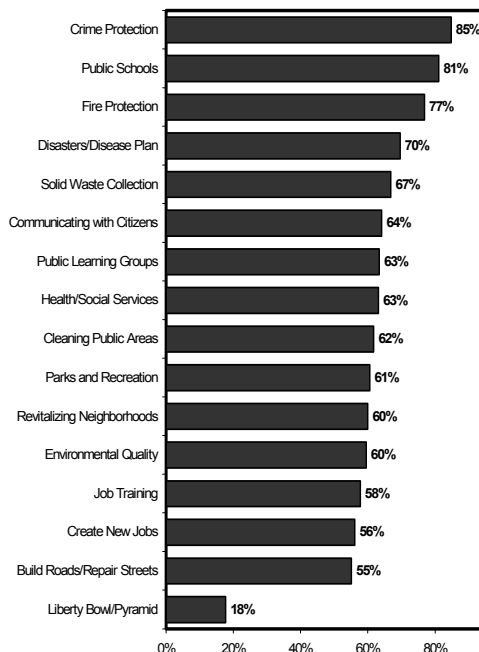


Figure 3-1 shows that funding public schools and providing fire protection were also high priorities for the citizens with

respective scores of 81 percent and 77 percent. Other service priorities—including social services, managing infrastructure, and planning—had scores ranging from 55 percent to 70 percent.

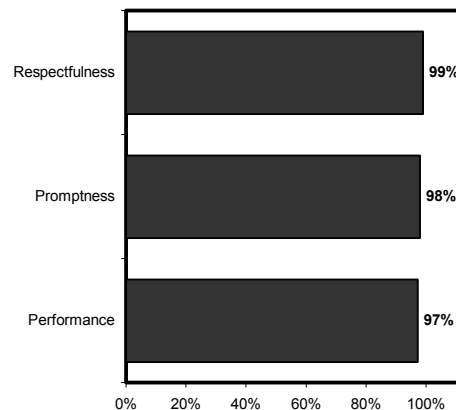
The Poll also asked citizens to rank large stadium and arena projects. The issue was addressed in a tangible way by asking about the importance of funding improvements to the Liberty Bowl Stadium and Pyramid. Figure 3-1 shows that only 18 percent of the citizens thought this option was a priority. This result was the lowest score of any priority in the history of the Memphis Poll.

Highly Rated Services

The Poll examined specific service measures and found a large number of highly rated services.

This year, as with previous years of the Memphis Poll, the most impressive services in the City of Memphis were provided by the Division of Fire Services. Figure 6-1 shows the scores for responding to fires, which averaged an extraordinarily high 98 percent. The average score for emergency ambulance service was also impressively high at 96 percent.

Figure 6-1: Fire Department

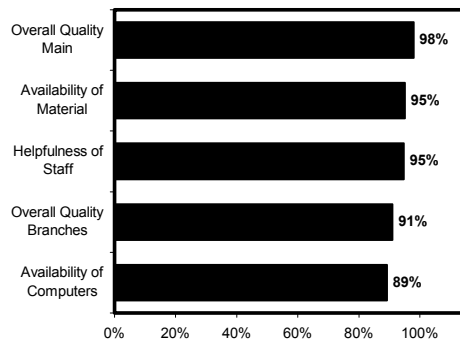


The Park Services Division has three services that historically have received high ratings from the citizens. These services were the Pink Palace Museum, Botanic Gardens, and The Zoo that had an average rating of 96 percent.

The Division of Public Works had several services that were impressive. Promptness in weekly collection of solid waste was rated at 96 percent, and promptness in collection of recycling was rated at 91 percent. Two other solid waste services, neatness and collection of uncontained waste showed improvements over previous years of the Memphis Poll. In addition, all categories of street maintenance showed improvement over previous years of the Memphis Poll.

Figure 8-6 shows the public libraries were also among the highest rated services. The scores for these services ranged from an 89 percent rating for computers to a 98 percent rating for the main library.

Figure 8-6: Citizens' Perceptions of Public Libraries



The Police Services Division showed continuing improvement for performance in calls for service. The results show consistent yearly changes improving from 66 percent in 2002 to 73 percent in 2005.

Problematic Services

The lowest scoring service in the entire Memphis Poll was the citizens' ratings of MLGW's cost of utilities—only 34 percent of the citizens thought that MGLW was doing a good job. This result was a 26 percent decline from the 2003 Memphis Poll.

The Park Service Division's public swimming pools have consistently been among the lower rated City service throughout the history of the Memphis Poll. Only 52 percent of the citizens in the 2005 Memphis Poll were satisfied with the public

swimming pools. However, this rating was an 8 percent improvement over the last three years of the Memphis Poll.

The Memphis Poll also examined the City's responses to rundown houses and abandoned vehicles provided by code enforcement. Code enforcement was recently moved from the Division of Public Services to the Division of Housing and Community Development. Only 60 percent of the citizens who called the City about rundown house were satisfied that the concerns were solved. In contrast 90 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the result when they called about abandoned vehicles.

The results for rundown houses were more positive when compared to the previous Memphis Poll when only 32 percent of the citizens thought their concern had been solved.

Contacting City Hall

Citizens were asked about their satisfaction when calling City Hall about a concern. Citizens were more positive about interaction (defined as phone professionalism and courtesy) with 89 percent of the citizens expressing satisfaction. In contrast, 70 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the responsiveness (defined as promptness and solving the problem). However, both of these figures are improvements over previous years of the Memphis Poll.

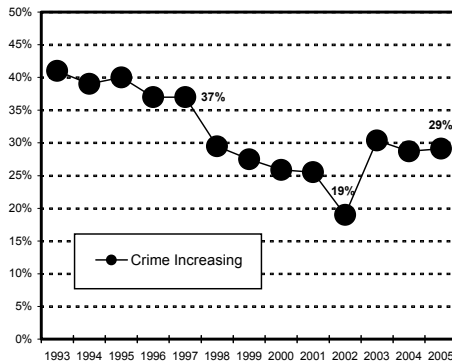
However, the 2005 Memphis Poll found widespread and historically higher concerns by whites compared to African Americans in their calls for services to City Hall. Whites were considerably less satisfied with the courtesy on the phone and performance from City Hall in solving the concern.

Concerns about Crime

The Memphis Poll found high levels of concerns about crime. For example, 29 percent of the citizens thought crime was increasing, 33 percent were concerned about

burglaries, and 24 percent were concerned about violent crime in their neighborhoods.

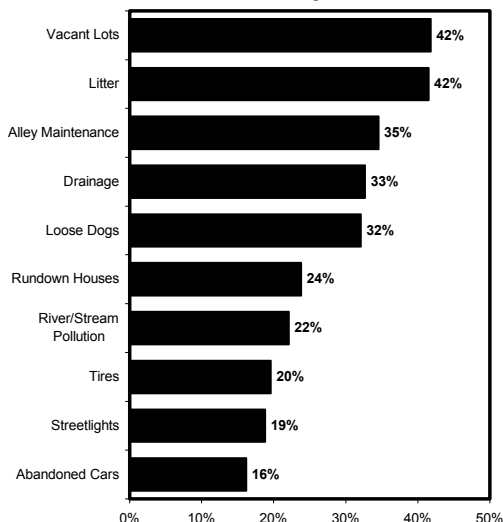
Figure 4-4: Overall Perceptions of Neighborhood Crime



However, the results for the 2005 Memphis Poll regarding concerns about crime appear to have stabilized. Figure 4-4 shows that citizens had about the same level of concerns about overall crime as in the previous two Memphis Polls.

Exceptions to this finding were concerns about gangs and drug sales in the citizens' neighborhoods. For example, 10 percent of the citizens were concerned about gangs in their neighborhoods in 2000. In contrast, 29 percent of the citizens were concerned about gangs in 2005.

Figure 9-3: Citizens' Perceptions of Physical Conditions as Neighborhood Problems



Concerns about Physical Conditions

Citizens were concerned about the physical conditions in their neighborhoods. Figure 9-3 shows that citizens were most troubled

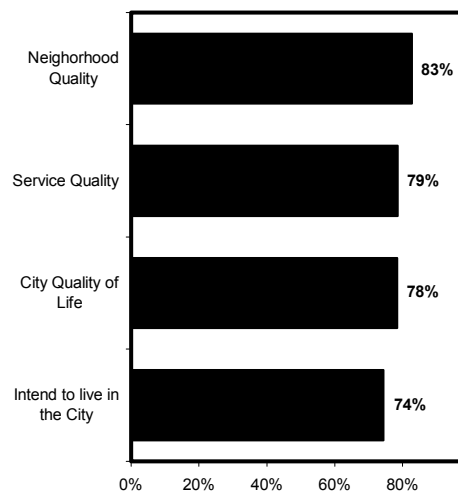
about vacant lots and litter on streets with 42 percent of the citizens expressing concerns. Citizens were also highly concerned about alley maintenance, drainage after rainstorms, and loose dogs.

Conclusions

Overall, citizens had a positive assessment of the City of Memphis and its public services. The Memphis Poll used four questions to measure the citizens' satisfaction with the City and its services. The 2005 Memphis Poll found that 83 percent were satisfied with their neighborhood, 79 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's services, 78 percent of the citizens were satisfied with the City's quality of life, and 74 percent intended to continue living in the City.

These are similar results to the previous years of the Memphis Poll and they reflect an overall view of the City that is positive.

Figure 2-1: Overall "Quality" Assessment by Citizens



In conclusion, citizens were highly satisfied with the Division of Fire Services, the public libraries, and the Pink Palace, Botanic Gardens and the Zoo in the Division of Park Services. However, citizens were especially concerned about the cost of utilities from MLGW and whites were concerned about their treatment when they called City Hall about their concerns.